BRITISH FILM DIGEST

(Special to The Digest from Ward Shaftesbury London Correspondent)

I HAVE just heard that arrangements are almost completed for the first line-up of productions to be distributed to the members of the British Independent Exhibitors (Distribution) Co. Quietly, and without ceremony, the organization of this novel and important enterprise has been going ahead and it is probable that in a very short time the company will be actually existing as a renting body.

The British Independent Exhibitors (Distribution) Co. was the natural consequence of the growing size and power of the larger circuits. With their hundreds of cinemas, the Circuit bookers have been able to acquire for their first-run halls all the choicest pictures and at prices which are ten to twenty-five percent lower than those at which the same pictures are being offered to the independent exhibitor. As a result, the independent showman has been gradually succumbing to an unpleasantly fatal kind of malnutrition. He can't get the good pictures at the right price so he has to take the second-rate films at the wrong price — so he soon discovers that his box-office has gone with the wind.

The new company was conceived as a concrete remedy for this situation. Various units will contract to make pictures for the organization and the exhibiting members thereof will control the production policies of these units. All the productions are to be made on very favourable terms and under strictly economic conditions. The exhibitors will thus get pictures that they themselves have contracted for at very reasonable prices.

The company has just appointed A. George Smith, an experienced producer, as director in charge of productions and the Rock Studios at Elstree have contracted to supply floor space and complete studio service. I understand that the first feature film to be made by the company will star the aviator, James Mollison. This will be an English version of "Courier du Sud", an air picture written by a friend of Mollison. Production contracts, involving the production of nearly forty pictures over the next two years, are said to be on the point of signature.

It is too early to make prophesies but personally I think that the scheme is doomed to an early death. It is very, very doubtful that a company of this nature, however ably directed, can ever hope to furnish amusement fare of sufficient merit to compete with the product of the major renting companies. However we shall all be watching the progress of the new company with great interest — it is a brave effort and may prove significant.

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WARDOUR STREET is all agog over the preparations for the Coronation. British Movietone News have just announced that they have made arrangements for advance copies of the Coronation news reel to be flown across the Atlantic by plane on the same day as the event. Amy Mollison and Mrs. Markham have both announced their willingness to make the flight. Subsidiary prints will follow in the Hindenburg . . . Warner Bros. have engaged John Drinkwater to write the story of a special Coronation production called "The King's People". It will be a cyclorama of the sixty years from Queen Victoria to the present king.

TALKING of Kings reminds me that the Film Producers Group have just issued a list of films supplied for private view by the King and Queen during their recent stay at Sandringham. Twenty seven features were supplied including seventeen American films. Of the latter, ten were M-G-M — among these were "Romeo and Juliet", "The Great Ziegfeld", "Born to Dance", "Tale of Two Cities", "San Francisco" and "The Gorgeous Hussy".

* * *

G-B'S picture of the Canadian Rockies, "The Great Barrier", is packing them in at the Gaumont, Haymarket. Latest reports have it that the film will be held over for another two weeks. "Theodora Goes Wild" is close on the tail of "Mr. Deeds" which holds the record gross at the Regal. "The Plainsman" just got a third week at the Plaza. Jack Buchanan's new musical "This'll Make You Whistle" is good box-office at the Empire.

* * *

I HEAR that Korda is planning a British screen musical using a bevy of Goldwyn Girls from Hollywood — that should be good. The show will be called "Lovelies from America" — a wow of a title — and is being written by the English author Evelyn Waugh. In the meantime, Director Josef Von Sternberg is hard at work over at Denham with London Film's "I, Claudius". Charles Laughton has the lead.

* * *

ERICH POMMER'S brilliant Elizabethan picture, "Fire Over England" recently completed at Denham for United Artists has just been awarded at Paris the gold medal by the Comite International pour la diffusion Artistique and Litteraire pour le Cinema. This is the third consecutive win for artists affiliated with U.A. Last year Selznick won the gold medal for his "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and the year before, King Vidor with "Our Daily Bread".

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THE trade show of "Moonlight Sonata", initial Pall Mall production and starring Ignace Jan Paderewski was a great triumph. The highlight of the film is of course the pianist's masterly renditions of musical pieces, especially the famous Sonata of Beethoven. Marie Tempest, well-known London actress, has the other leading role.

* * *

FRANCIS HARLEY of Twentieth Century-Fox revealed by transatlantic telephone recently that his company are going to arrange a really big presentation of "Lloyd's of London" round the middle of April. It will probably be in a West End hall . . . I understand, by the way, that Fox is not at all pleased with G-B's plan to scrap its distribution system and handle its product through C. W. Woolf's General Film Distributors. No wonder — Fox owns a 49% interest in Ostrers' organization. If the plan is carried out, G-B would reduce its production to eight pictures a year, making four at Pinewood and four at Gainsborough Studios. U.S. G-B organization would probably be retained.

Joan Crawford Has Done It Again In "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney"
She Comes First!

WASHINGTON FILM DIGEST

(Special to The Digest by George W. Mehrtens, Columbia Trade Press Staff Correspondent)

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 2—(CTP)

MANY leaders of the Motion Picture Industry both locally and throughout the nation joined this week in paying sincere tribute to Harry M. Crandall. pioneer in the Motion Picture business of the Capital city, who ended his life by inhaling gas in his apartment in the Parkside Hotel here.

Mr. Crandall had been despondent for several weeks over his inability to reenter the Motion Picture business.

Former local president of the Motion Picture Exhibitors League of America, and at one time one of the largest theatre owners in the Capital, Mr. Crandall shortly after the collapse of the ill-fated Knickerbocker Theatre due to heavy snows, costing 98 lives in 1923, later sold out his entire interest to Warner Bros.

Services were held at the Crandall home at 4530 Sixteenth Street, N.W., with the Rev. John C. Palmer, Pastor of the Washington Heights Presbyterian Church, officiating. Honorary pall bearers included, Alvin Newmeyer, Clifford K. Berryman, Frank V. Killian, Harry S. Wolf, Dr. Malcomb G. Gibbs, Nelson B. Bell, Andrew R. Kelley and T. L. Souder. Active pall bearers were former business associates of Mr. Crandall, George A. Crouch, Harry E. Lohmeyer, Guy Wonder, Nat Glasser, Robert E. Etris and Ashley M. Abendschein. Mr. Crandall is survived by his widow and three daughters.

* * *

SWEEPING investigation of government expenditure of funds for propaganda through the medium of Motion Pictures was indicated this week when Congressman John Taber of New York declared he would ask an inquiry into money spent for dissemination of official propaganda through movies.

"I know there has been a great deal spent," Taber told Canadian Moving Picture Digest, "And it is my intention to get to the bottom of it."

Asked who was supporting his investigation, the New York Congressman replied that there was no definite bloc of congressmen, but that there were "a few honest ones left" and "they will press the investigation".

Taber stated that to the best of his knowledge there had been "a tremendous amount" spent by W.P.A. and P.W.A. and other such agencies, and while little had been spent with Motion Picture houses individually, there had been much expended in producing government films such as "The Plough that Broke the Plains", and others.

Figures before the Committee on Appropriations, of which he is ranking Republican member. Taber said, showed that the government is now spending $20,000,000. a year for printing official propaganda in the Government Printing office, and concluded that this figure was twice that which was spent prior to 1933.

THE newly organized "Manchukuo" National Policy Film Producing Company expects to begin the production of Motion Pictures within a short time, according to reports to the Commerce Department from Tokyo.

The company has purchased, according to Assistant American Trade Commissioner C. H. Boehringer, a site embracing approximately 36,000 square feet in the outskirts of Jsinking, Manchuria, where a modern studio will be constructed. An attempt is being made by the company, it is stated, to assemble actors and actresses who will represent the so-called five races of the Manchu Empire.

This Manchukuo Film Company is known to be under the sponsorship of the Japanese authorities in Manchuria. A number of Japanese advisers have been invited to give technical assistance, including representatives of the Schokiku Film Producing Company and the Photo Chemical Laboratories, Ltd., prominent Japanese film producing concerns.

* * *

THAT the Motion Picture Industry would play a considerable part in the nation's judicial procedure was revealed here this week, when it was disclosed that Congressman Sam Hobbs, of Alabama, introduced a bill proposing to install moving picture cameras, complete with sound track, in at least one courtroom in each judicial district, to make visual and auditory records of all court proceedings liable to be appealed.

In explaining the theory behind his bill, Hobbs pointed out that often demeanor and inflection of voice of both witnesses and judges has a definite effect on the decision, which cannot be properly interpreted by appelate courts from mere written records. Under Hobbs' proposal the Supreme Court, the Circuit Courts of Appeals and the United States District courts would draw up rules to allow recording by sound movies of special cases expected to be appealed.

* * *

THE Congressional Battle of the Century between opposing forces in connection with the now highly controversial Dickstein Alien Actors Bill still continues this week, as representatives from the Dramatic and Concert Stage appear before the House Immigration Committee to present testimony for and against the measure.

While the Dickstein measure has a highly patriotic flavor, it has been bitterly opposed by not only members of the theatrical profession but Committee members as well, it is the general concensus of opinion that unless radically changed the measure will not be successful at this session of Congress.

Chief among the Committee members in opposition to the proposed measure are Congressman Charles Kramer, of California, and Congresswoman Caroline O'Day of New York, personal friend of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Theatre Equipment and COMPLETE SUPPLIES

Projectors and Parts.
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Coleman Electric Co.
258 Victoria St.
TORONTO, ONT.

EVERYTHING FOR THE THEATRE FROM SHEET TO STREET

Coronation Court Will Last Eleven Weeks — The Biggest Show

Conklin In Winnipeg

J. J. Conklin

A FILM exchange building, housing offices of nine film distributing companies in Winnipeg, will be built on the Colony St. side of the Hudson's Bay company "triangle" on Memorial boulevard. it was announced Feb. 20 by Col John Cooper, of Toronto, president of the Canadian Film Distributors' association, who was in Winnipeg for a few days.

Although designs are still in the preliminary stage, it will be a one-storey structure, costing about $100,000. Plans call for it to be ready for occupancy by October 15.

Because of the special requirements for film storage, the structure is being limited to one storey in accordance with modern practice. Though nine film companies will have separate units side by side, the construction will be uniform over its frontage of 284 feet.

The film companies interested in the new building are Canadian Universal Film Co., Ltd.; Columbia Pictures of Canada, Ltd.; Empire Films, Ltd.; Paramount Film Service, Ltd.; RKO Distributing Corp of Canada, Ltd.; Regal Films, Ltd.; Twentieth Century-Fox Corp., Ltd.; United Artists Corp.; and Vitagraph Ltd. All are at present tenants in the Film Exchange building on Hargrave St. in Winnipeg.

A feature of the new structure will be the newly-designed storage vaults, to provide absolute protection for the films. The building, when completed, will be the most up-to-date film building in the Dominion.

* * *

MARAUDERS stole $350 from the Colonial Theatre, 634 Main St., Winnipeg, during the night of Feb. 27 after taking off the door of the safe. It was the first safe robbery in the city in recent weeks. The thieves were believed to have hidden in the theatre after the last performance Thursday night. The theatre was entered about nine months ago but the thieves were disturbed while at work on the strong-box. One of the gang was arrested shortly afterwards and sent to the penitentiary for that and other crimes.

* * *

THREE new moving picture theatres will be built in Winnipeg this year, two on Portage avenue and one in the northwest section of the city. Plans have been prepared and the approval of the building inspector and the city engineer's department will be secured shortly. One will cost $55,000 and the other two around $40,000. They will be constructed in time for opening in autumn.

* * *

BOBBY BREEN in "Rainbow on the River", at the Lyceum Theatre in Winnipeg, running his friend Deanna Durbin a race for long run honors. His picture in Winnipeg this winter has now been held for the fourth week, an eloquent tribute to its high quality.

Australian Film Digest

by LEON STONE

LOCALLY produced short gathering encomiums from both trade and public is "The Song of the Bush". Mel Nicholls is responsible for this musical novelty, which features the world famed Aussie native or "Teddy" bears, and is being distributed by Universal.

* * *

"SAN FRANCISCO" put up worthwhile records in New Zealand. At Aukland St. James, first three weeks receipts topped five-weeks season of "Naughty Marietta" by 6 per cent. Over four weeks period "Frisco" beat "Marietta" by 43 per cent and "The Bounty" by 30 per cent. At Wellington Majestic, first two weeks cracked "David Copperfield" figures by actually 86 per cent. At this house "Frisco" beat "Marietta" and "The Bounty" by 44 and 42 per cent. All three had a three weeks run.

* * *

PAUL ROBESON has been given an ether airing in Sydney twice lately via his films. Australian Broadcasting Commission's national network took excerpts from "The Song of Freedom", British picture, in their regular Sunday evening film broadcast. Radio 2GB radiated clips from "Show Boat" from Dave Martin's Liberty Theatre, where it's in its 27th week.

* * *

WORK has commenced on the erection of M-G-M's Brisbane show-window house. Seating 1411 — 900 stalls, 511 circle — all the latest modern innovations in talkie theatres will be incorporated. Constructed on an L shaped plan, the front wing will be utilized for M-G-M's Brisbane branch offices, with film dispatch and film vaults at rear. M-G-M have contracted with Snider-Dean to release at Brisbane St. James. M-G-M's Cremorne house has been so held up by continued seasons of its product, it was necessary to look for an additional outlet.

Scene outside the Liberty Theatre, Sydney, Australia, at 9.55 A.M., during the 30th week of Universal's "Show Boat".

Opposition Leader Ontario Legislature Asks Information Concerning All

RADIO FILM DIGEST

by JAMES LEWIS SMITH

YOUNG Bobby Breen, Toronto's gift to the Radio and Screen, seems to be having the same trouble which complicates the world of fisticuffs, too many managers. Apparently three men have a say in the managing of the youthful songster, Sol Lesser, producer of the Bobby Breen pictures, W. D. Shapiro, who discovered the prodigy, and Eddie Cantor, through whose sponsorship Breen rose to fame.

It seems that the trouble started when Shapiro signed Breen to an NBC contract without consulting Lesser and Cantor. Bobby is at present a member of the CBS family, through his program with Eddie Cantor.

All in all it is quite a mix-up with everybody denying that they know anything at all about it

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THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM, in an intensive campaign for broadcast eminence in Hollywood, is striving to line up a list of prominent film folk on its rosters, rivalling the mighty NBC in its West Coast operations. William S. Paley, President of CBS, remains on the Coast for the present, where Larry Lowman, Vice-President in charge of the artists' bureau, and Larry White will join him.

* * *

JACK BENNY has signed a three-year contract with his present sponsor which will keep him on the air until the Summer of 1940.

According to an agreement reached between the comedian and General Foods, the makers of Jell-O, "Buck" will be heard exclusively during the next three years under the auspices of the "six delicious flavors".

Mary Livingstone, Mrs. Benny in private life, has also been signed on the three year basis.

Starting this Sunday Benny and his troupe will be heard from New York, and will broadcast from there for a series of three broadcasts. The Jell-O programs will continue to be heard Sundays over the NBC-Red Network at 7.00 p.m. EST.

Andy Devine, screen comedian and latest member of the Benny entourage, is also making the trip East with Benny, and will be heard as usual Sunday night.

* * *

"PRETTY KITTY KELLY", a new dramatic series with a romantic setting, will replace the "Renfrew of the Mounted" sketches over the Columbia network beginning Monday, March 8. The adventures of Kitty Kelly will be heard at the same time as its predecessor, Mondays through Fridays from 6.45 to 7.00 p.m., EST, and will be under the same sponsorship, Continental Baking Company in the interests of Wonder Bread and Hostess Cake. Arline Blackburn, young dramatic actress, has been chosen to play the title role.

* * *

THE Ice and Ice refrigerator sponsors of the new Gladys Swarthout series, have taken out a $50,000 policy with Lloyds of London to insure Miss Swarthout against the possibility of missing a broadcast.

The insurance, believed to be the first of its kind ever issued on a radio artist, was prompted by the opera and screen star's narrow escape from missing her inaugural program on the new series, February 10, two days after she was forced to cancel her appearance in "Tales of Hoffman" at the Metropolitan Opera House, due to laryngitis.

In her current series, Miss Swarthout is heard with Frank K. Chapman, baritone, and Robert Armbruster's orchestra. NBC-Red Network, Wednesdays at 10.30 EST.

* * *

FOR the fourteenth consecutive year the first Sunday of May will usher in National Music Week, it was announced last week by the National Music Week Committee in New York.

In keeping with its annual purpose to concentrate its activities in developing some phase of American music culture, National Music Week for 1937, May 2 to 8, will be dedicated to a cause indicated in this year's slogan, "Foster Local Music Talent".

Mr. David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of America, is the Chairman of the National Music Week Committee.

* * *

ROSALINE GREENE celebrated on Monday, March 1, the thirteenth anniversary of her air debut by becoming mistress of ceremonies in The Hour of Charm, current NBC show of the sponsor that discovered her.

Miss Greene, who was the original Mary Lou of Show Boat, was voted "Radio's Perfect Voice" at the Radio World's Fair in 1926. Back in 1924, when the Long Island girl was a sophomore at State College for Teachers at Albany, N.Y., the General Electric Company organized the WGY Players, and the young sophomore was chosen as leading lady.

The General Electric show features Phil Spitalny and his band of 30 girls, and is broadcast Mondays from 4.00 to 4.30 p.m., EST, over the NBC-Red Network.

Lovely Lily Pons, diminutive star of Opera, Radio and Screen, now starring with Gene Raymond in the RKO-Radio production, "That Girl From Paris".

Jack Arthur Searching For Canadian Screen Talent For British Films, Hard To Find, States Jack.

SHOOTING THE STARS

Cameras are now grinding at the M-G-M studios on "THE OLD SOAK", the Don Marquis success which stars WALLACE BEERY, with Janet Beecher, Eric Linden, Una Merkel, Ted Healy and Robert McWade in the principal supporting roles; J. Walter Ruben is directing and Harry Rapf in charge of production . . . RKO RADIO has purchased the screen rights of one of the most prominent Ziegfeld musical productions, "IRENE", which is to be adapted into a pretentious film starring GINGER ROGERS . . . AL JOLSON will soon make his debut in the production field as producer of "BROADWAY MUTINEERS", which will star Mrs. Al Jolson, RUBY KEELER; "Broadway Mutineers" will be a WARNER BROS. musical . . . three songs for "THIS IS MY AFFAIR", the 20TH CENTURY-FOX picture starring ROBERT TAYLOR and BARBARA STANWYCK, have been completed by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel, one of the ace music and lyrics team of the screen; the songs are "I Hum a Waltz", "Fill It Up", and "Put Down Your Glass, Pick Up Your Girl and Dance" . . . LOU BROCK, producer of UNIVERSAL'S million dollar musical spectacle, "Top of the Town", has been assigned to "FIGHTING THE UNDERWORLD", a confidence game story which was written by Philip S. Van Crize, a Denver lawyer; the story is based on a well-known Denver criminal case . . SAMUEL GOLDWYN announced last week that GEORGE GERSHWIN, one of the most famous of modern composers, will write the entire score for the forthcoming "GOLDWYN FOLLIES"; among the many numbers Gershwin will devise will be a "Swing Symphony", for the sequence in which the entire American Ballet will appear under the direction of its famous ballet master, Georges Balanchine; cast assignments include the Ritz Brothers, Helen Jepson and Phil Baker . . . "ALL THE BROTHERS WERE VALIANT", a gripping saga of the sea and brave whalers, by BEN AMES WILLIAMS, has been purchased by M-G-M for a forthcoming all-star production . . . . KUBEC GLASMON, newest associate producer at the NEW UNIVERSAL studios, has for his first assignment his own novelette, "THE COP", which goes before the cameras next week, with Milton Carruth directing . . . BORIS KARLOFF, famous for his characterizations in "horror" flickers, has a role sharply in contrast with his former types in "CHINA BANDIT", to be produced by WARNER BROS.; Karloff will play a Chinese coolie who becomes a bandit general; others in the cast will include Ricardo Cortez, Beverly Roberts and Vladimir Sokoloff, Warner's latest recruit from the Continent; the story is an original by Wilbur Crane . . . BETTY GRABLE, blonde young contract player, has been given the feminine lead in the RKO RADIO production "THE KANGAROOS", recently purchesed as a starring vehicle for BERT WHEELER and ROBERT WOOLSEY; Lee Marcus will produce . . . ALEXANDER KORDA'S production of the H. G. WELLS comedy, "THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES", starring ROLAND YOUNG, is enjoying unprecedented popularity in America; it has been held over indefinitely at the Rivoli Theatre, N.Y., as a result of S.R.O. business during its current engagement; the picture will be released in Canada by REGAL FILMS . . . . . with TONY MARTIN and LEAH RAY in the romantic leading roles, "EVERYBODY SING" will go into production at 20TH CENTURY-FOX, March 16; Joan Davis and Dixie Dunbar have featured roles.

Walter Pidgeon, Canadian-born actor, who will soon be seen in an important role in Universal's "As Good As Married".

TORONTO THEATRES

LOEW'S—Manager Jules Bernstein — Merle Oberon and Brian Aherne in the Samuel Goldwyn production, "Beloved Enemy", a United Artists release. Second feature—M-G-M's "Sinner Take All", with Bruce Cabot.

TIVOLI—Manager D. Krendall — Charles Boyer and Marlene Dietrich in the Selznick International production, "Garden of Allah", a United Artists release. Also Chas. Ruggles and Alice Brady in Paramount's "Mind Your Own Business".

UPTOWN—Manager Jack Arthur — Jessie Matthews in "Head Over Heels in Love". Second feature—Sylvia Sidney in "The Woman Alone". Both Gaumont-British pictures.

IMPERIAL—Manager Tom Daley — Errol Flynn and Anita Louise with Sir Cedric Hardwicke in "Green Light", a Warner Bros. production. Also "They Wanted to Get Married", an RKO Radio picture with Gordon Jones and Betty Furness.

SHEA'S—Manager Jerry Shea — Warner Bros. "Smart Blonde", with Glenda Farrell and Barton MacLane. On the stage—Ray Noble and His Orchestra.

EGLINTON—Manager Bob Eves — Paramount's "Lives of a Bengal Lancer", starring Gary Cooper and Sir Guy Standing. Also Paul Robeson in "Song of Freedom", a Regal Films release.

HOLLYWOOD—Manager Raymond Allen — Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers and Irene Dunne in "Roberta". Second feature—Katharine Hepburn and Herbert Marshall in "A Woman Rebels". Two RKO Radio productions.

What do you think?

"He loves me," she told herself, "but he isn't mine ...can't ever be, as long as she lives. To him this may be nothing more than an adventure, but I love him, and I've got to give him up...Can I? Must I?"

"SHE SHOULD BE ASHAMED!"

"But any girl would do the same thing..."

"When I was young such things weren't discussed..."

"No, you whispered them and that's worse..."

"No man is worth breaking your heart over. If he wants to sow his wild oats—that's his business..."

"You wouldn't say that if your husband left you for a younger woman. I know that I'd fight to save our love!"

He's a genius

That's no excuse.

"SHE'S A FOOL..."

"I'd do the same thing"

Will Be Most Discussed Picture in Years!

"MEN ARE NOT GODS"

An Alexander Korda Production Starring

MIRIAM HOPKINS

GERTRUDE LAWRENCE - SEBASTIAN SHAW

REGAL FILMS LTD., Sole Canadian Distributors